

City Council Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2016
City Hall Auditorium
7:00 pm

Meeting was called to Order at 7:00 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilor Sickorez.

Members present were Councilor Sickorez, Councilor Stanganelli, Councilor Bartley, Councilor Einson, Councilor Lavoie, Councilor McClure, Councilor McMilleon, Councilor Sherwood and Councilor Scorzoni.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to accept the minutes of May 10, 2016 and May 24, 2016 as submitted. Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Correspondence

a. President/Vice President Communications

Councilor Scorzoni asked for members for the Open Space Committee and Councilors Sherwood and Stanganelli were appointed to serve on that committee.

Relay for Life: The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life will take place this Saturday June 18th from 4pm until 6am Sunday morning at Landry Stadium. This will mark Relay For Life's 14th year here in Amesbury, having recently reached 1 million dollars raised in the fight against cancer, during the 2015 event.

The event will kick off at 4pm with remarks from survivors, caregivers and local officials - and then will proceed throughout the evening with survivor events, team fundraisers and music by local bands. All are invited and the event is open to the public until 11pm.

b. Communication from Elected Officials, Boards and Commissions

Councilor McMilleon had handouts from the Educational meeting held on June 1. (On file in Clerk's Office). He summarized the packet and stated that it shows where we are with the SOI for the Amesbury Elementary School and that there is detail on the process. He noted that they will have to appropriate \$600,000 within 18 months if they want to move forward. He stated that it covers the strategic plan and grade level configurations and a list of responses to audits that have been done by DESC and Melanson and Heath and their recommendations and how they are responding to them. He commented that there is valuable information in this packet and any questions should be directed to the Superintendent.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that there was interest at the last meeting to hold a joint meeting with the Education Committee and the School Committee to review all of this and that they should plan it a couple of months out from now.

Councilor Einson stated that the Superintendent has asked him to mention that there are a couple of on-line surveys that he hopes to get feedback from which are on the schools website. There are also a couple of strategic planning meetings coming up on Wednesday, June 29 from 9:00am to 10:30am or on June 30 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.

A moment of silence was held for the tragedy in Orlando.

2016-051 Accept resignation of Rebecca Jordan and declare vacancy of Library Trustees with a term to expire on December 31, 2017.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that we need to post this for 30 days and have applicants provide their interest to the Clerk. Because of the timing we will not get to this by the July meeting so most likely this will come back to us in September.

Councilor Sherwood made a motion to approve 2016-051, accepting the resignation of Rebecca Jordan and to declare a vacancy of the Library Trustees with a term to expire on June 30, 2017

Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

c. Council Communications, Announcements and Committee Reports

Appointments

2016-056: Appointment of Adrienne Lennon to the Conservation Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2019

Ms. Lennon stated that she is a resident of 15 Belmont St. and is a Field Biologist and a wetlands ecologist. She stated that she has been attending Conservation Commission meetings for about six months and noticed that they often have trouble with a quorum because they only have four members and they have seven seats and she wants to help.

Councilor Stanganelli stated Ms. Lennon had attended a meeting on Woodsom Farm and was very knowledgeable and helpful with the use of some of that property and it would be good to have someone with that background.

Councilor Lavoie asked Ms. Lennon how long she has been in Amesbury.

Ms. Lennon stated that she has lived here for two and one half years.

Councilor Sherwood moved to approve 2016-056 the appointment of Adrienne Lennon to the Conservation Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2019.

Councilor McClure seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

7. Licenses & Permits – FYI-attached list

Councilor Scorzoni stated that they have received a total of 22 license and permit approvals. Of these, 11 are new licenses and 11 are renewals. All of these are being approved tonight with the usual stipulations.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approved to accept the list as presented. Councilor McClure seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

8. Pole Hearings – None at this time

9. Public Comment

Scott Winters, 146 ½ Market St stated that he has lived in Amesbury for eight years. He spoke regarding the marijuana law and thinks the fine is too steep at \$300.00.

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Councilor Scorzoni stated that although this is on the agenda tonight and the Ordinance Committee has met already, they have had some discussions with the Police Chief and the Administration and this will be postponed for another month to work out some details but they do appreciate the feedback.

Gail Browne, 2 Woodlawn St spoke regarding the budget and encouraged them to pass the fully funded budget. She also hopes that with the new opening on the Library Board of Trustees that people will submit applications.

10. Council Response to Public Comment - none

11. Public Hearings:

2016-001 Fiscal Year 2017 Budget

Councilor McClure read the Finance Committee recommendations.

The public hearing was opened and closed.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that typically the Council votes the budget using the Kaufmann Rule and goes line by line on all the particular items in the budget and if a Councilor has any objections they raise that and we hold that item and move on to it after the fact. Based upon a unanimous recommendation from Finance unless there is any objection he recommends that they move forward with adopting the order as is.

Councilor Sherwood moved the Finance Committee Recommendation to approve the FY 2017 budget,

Be it Ordered by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled, and by the authority of the same as submitted: thus approve a total appropriation of: \$ 54,294,150 That to fund said appropriation, the City Council approves \$52,469,804 to be raised by taxation and other revenue sources and further that \$ 1,824,346 be applied from the sources detailed below:

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Sale of Cemetery Lots	\$ 20,000
Ambulance Receipts	840,000
Youth Revolving	386,846
Cemetery Interest	10,000
Waterways Improvement	7,500
Regional Health	60,000
Free Cash	<u>500,000</u>
Total	\$ 1,824,346

Further that the City Council approves the following enterprise fund budgets:

Landry Stadium	\$ 9,000	Total Landry
Sewer Department	\$ 3,011,831	Total Sewer
Water Department	\$ 4,106,587	Total Water

And that the City Council hereby appropriates the following:

TOTAL APPROPRIATION \$ 61,421,568

Councilor Sickorez seconded. Roll Call Vote – 9 Yes

Councilor Lavoie stated that for the public and anyone watching that the Finance Committee reviewed this budget over three nights and heard from all the departments and went through the

line items. There were questions but no concerns at the end of discussion. So, the fact that we are steamrolling this through is not from the lack of study and discussion and input and questioning the administration and the department heads. The Mayor put together a very comprehensive budget.

2016-043 An Order to amend the Energy Committee by-laws. Councilor McMilleon Sponsor
Summary: This order will amend the Energy Committee by-laws.

Councilor Bartley read the recommendation of the Ordinance Committee.

Councilor McMilleon stated that the primary purpose of the sponsorship of this was initiated by the Energy Committee. One difficulty that the committee is having is making sure they have a quorum in order to vote on issues that are coming before us. The changes are to expand and be more specific about the qualifications for someone to be on that committee. The qualifications were a bit restrictive and we have opened them up a bit with the new language.

Councilor Stanganelli noted that he is a member of the Energy Committee and they have had difficulty getting a quorum. The committee has done a lot of work for the city in terms of renovations to the schools which has created a savings of \$10,000 for just the Middle School alone and we need to move forward and that is why we need more people on the committee and this does expand it and in no way makes it more difficult for us to do business.

Councilor McMilleon stated that they probably should have Mr. Barrasso come in and give a brief summary of the kind of work that the committee has done.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that they will keep that in mind to add it to a future agenda and then he opened and closed the public hearing.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approve 2016-043 an Order to amend the Energy Committee by-laws as recommended and presented.
Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-045 An Order to appropriate \$200,000 from Free Cash for the repair and maintenance of streets. Mayor Gray Sponsor

Summary: This order will provide funding for repair and maintenance of streets per the DPW 2016 construction plan

Councilor McClure read the Finance Committee recommendations. There were questions asked regarding the Chapter 90 projects and the Free Cash balance.

Jim Lynch, CFO stated that he believed they were referring to some correspondence that he sent to each of them that broke down some of the orders that you are either looking at tonight or will be coming up and all together there was \$805,000 that they had in releases that they had accounted for. At the beginning of the fiscal year they had a little over \$1.1 million in free cash and after you back out that \$805,000 we will have a little over \$330,000.

Councilor Scorzoni opened and closed the public hearing

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approve 2016-045 an Order to appropriate \$200,000 from Free Cash for the repair and maintenance of streets as sponsored by Mayor Gray and recommended by the Finance Committee.

Councilor McClure seconded and a roll call vote was taken 9-YES

2016-046 An Ordinance relative to Public Consumption of Marijuana or Tetrahydrocannabinol – Mayor Gray Sponsor

Summary: This ordinance proposes the prohibition of public consumption or use of marijuana or tetrahydrocannabinol on or in any place within City limits which is accessible to the public.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that in prior discussions with the Chief of Police and with the Administration they have decided to continue this public hearing to the July 12, 2016 Council meeting to continue to further refine the bill.

Councilor Lavoie moved to continue the public hearing to the July 12, 2016 meeting. Councilor Sherwood seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-049 An Ordinance Relative to Municipal Electricity Aggregation – Councilor Scorzoni sponsor

Summary: this resolution would authorize the City of Amesbury to initiate a program to aggregate the city's electrical load in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 164, Section 134.

Councilor McClure read the Finance Committee recommendations.

Councilor Bartley read the Ordinance Committee recommendations.

Councilor McMilleon stated that he still has an issue with a section even in the amended version to initiate a process to aggregate the electricity load. He is against that wording because they had already initiated this. The Energy Committee and the Mayor have already been working on this and it is not the Council's place to initiate this effort. They are doing due diligence in pursuing this and he feels that they are all in favor of it. He appreciates the second amendment that states it is subject to the approval of a majority vote of the City Council when it is all packaged together and they find out who is going to be proposed to come up with the aggregate Company to be used.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that as a sponsor on this, his understanding of this with discussions that he has had with Mr. Barrasso and some of the Energy Committee; by way of background, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission has engaged with Colonial Power to run municipal aggregation programs throughout Merrimack Valley so they are under contract with them, but in order to move forward and understand their pricing, to go out to bid, they need to get approval from the Council to move forward. Colonial is not the only one, there are a number of others players that are talking to municipalities. There is an additional review process by the Council and he feels comfortable that safeguards are there.

Councilor Sherwood stated that for the public they are talking about the opportunity for the municipality to enter into a contract with a third party Energy Company and get for the citizens of the town a bulk rate or better rate for electricity. It does not establish a utility but it would be a city wide contract instead of every household having a separate relationship. With the changes

from the Finance Committee the city can proceed with getting those bids but actually entering into a contract would require additional Council approval.

Councilor Bartley stated this is for private homes as well and that in her reading there are a lot of cons about it and it needs to be straightened out before we ask the citizens of Amesbury to participate.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that was correct and at the end of the day the work with Tom and some of the other players out there as well as the Energy Committee, they have to go out there and see what the market bears. What the market is like and whether or not it is even beneficial for us. It may not be. We have heard from other communities that it has been great. One potential benefit is that we are able to take the system benefit charges that the utilities and state otherwise capture and use it for energy efficiency programs that Amesbury could initiate for its own population. It is opt out. If residents don't like this they can opt out and go right back to basic service. Before we move forward on any type of process he feels we would all have to feel with eyes wide open how the community gets notified on this and how they get to opt out. He agrees this is complicated but feels we need to just go through the process, see what we get and ultimately see if it works. He sees value that other cities and towns have used aggregation in order to pay for the Town's Energy Coordinator.

Councilor McClure stated that this is really step 1. We don't have a contract from anyone. This is a jump start and we have nothing to evaluate.

Councilor Stanganelli stated that as a resident, a property owner and as a business owner he is excited about the prospect of lowering his costs. He feels this is a great Economic Development tool and makes the city more affordable to live in and makes us attractive to other businesses. This vote just gets the process moving.

Councilor Scorzoni opened and closed the public hearing.

Councilor Lavoie moved for approval 2016-049 as amended in the Finance Committee and the Ordinance committee. Councilor Stanganelli seconded. Roll Call Vote – 9 Yes

2016-050 An Order to authorize a transfer from "School Audit" (5110) to "Legal Services" (151) for the purpose of covering unanticipated legal costs. – Mayor Gray Sponsor
Summary: Transfer \$29,100 from "School Audit" (5110) to "Legal Services" (151) for the purpose of covering unanticipated legal costs.

Councilor McClure read the Finance Committee recommendations.

Evan Kenney, Mayor's Aide stated that his calculations were off and he recommended an amendment to correct the figure to \$28,694.53.

Councilor Scorzoni opened and closed the public hearing.

Councilor Sherwood moved to accept 2016-050 an order to authorize a transfer from "School Audit" (5110) to "Legal Services" (151) for the purpose of covering unanticipated legal costs with the amended transfer amount to be \$28,694.53. Councilor Bartley seconded. Roll Call Vote – 9 Yes

12. First Readings

2016-052 An Order to fund the deficit in the Snow & Ice budget for fiscal year 2016. – Mayor Sponsor

Summary: An order to transfer \$105,000 from Free Cash to the Snow & Ice budget, in order to cover fiscal year 2016 expenditures that were in excess of the initial City Council approved budget appropriation.

Councilor Sherwood moved to send to the Finance Committee and hold a public hearing on July 12, 2016. Councilor Stanganelli seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-053 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$125,000 from the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging. – Mayor Sponsor

Summary: This order seeks to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$125,000 from the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging for the purpose of creating and implementing new programs for the benefit of older adults in Amesbury.

Councilor Sickorez moved to send to the Finance Committee and hold a public hearing on July 12, 2016. Councilor Bartley seconded and was voted Unanimous.

2016-054 An Order to authorize a transfer between General Department Funds. – Mayor Sponsor

Summary: A transfer of \$161,000 between General Department funds to cover fiscal year 2016 expenditures.

Councilor Bartley moved to send to the Finance Committee and hold a public hearing on July 12, 2016. Councilor Sickorez seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-055 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$40,000 from the Community Compact IT Grant Program. – Mayor Sponsor

Summary: This order seeks to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$40,000 from the Community Compact IT Grant Program for the purpose of upgrading IT Infrastructure.

Councilor Sherwood moved to accept 2016-055 as a late file. Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Councilor Einson moved to send to the Finance Committee and hold a public hearing on July 12, 2016. Councilor Stanganelli seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Councilor Lavoie made an announcement that Amesbury Days kicks off on Thursday, June 23 with the Block Party

Councilor McClure moved to adjourn at 7:55 pm. Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Dunning
Assistant City Clerk